

K-585

1842; 1887

Olivet United Methodist Church

Galena

Private

The present Olivet Methodist Church building has served Methodists of the Galena area for almost 150 years although in 1887 its appearance was considerably altered by a Victorian remodeling. The congregation has an older history, with Methodism in the area beginning before the Revolutionary War with a visit by the itinerant Francis Asbury, the "Father of American Methodism." An early frame chapel, perhaps the first, was built by 1802. The Olivet Methodist Church building as it stands today is an interesting hybrid of styles. It was transformed from what was undoubtedly a very plain, simple, perhaps somewhat Greek Revival style of meeting house with one section to a Victorian three-part Kent County church with vestibule-tower, nave and chancel projection. New lancet-arched windows were installed, the gallery removed, the facade windows for the gallery blocked, a tower and corner vestigial buttresses built, and possibly the chancel projection built at that time. The main section of the church is still essentially simple, but the tower is clearly in the Victorian Gothic Revival tradition with octagonal spire and pinnacles. The tower in particular is a noteworthy example of the Gothic Revival Style with its octagonal wood spire over a brick tower that has pinnacles. The original 1842 building probably bore considerable resemblance to the building of the same period erected by Shrewsbury Parish, also Victorianized later in the nineteenth century.

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Olivet Methodist Episcopal Church

and/or common Olivet United Methodist Church

2. Location

street & number East side Rt. 313 (S. Main St.), 800 ft. south of Route 290 (Cross St.) ___ not for publication

city, town Galena ___ vicinity of congressional district

state Maryland county Kent

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
___ district	___ public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	___ agriculture ___ museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	___ unoccupied	___ commercial ___ park
___ structure	___ both	___ work in progress	___ educational ___ private residence
___ site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	___ entertainment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
___ object	___ in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	___ government ___ scientific
	___ being considered	___ yes: unrestricted	___ industrial ___ transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	___ no	___ military ___ other:

4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Trustees, Olivet Methodist Church

street & number telephone no.:

city, town Galena, state and zip code Maryland 21635

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Kent County Courthouse liber TW 2

street & number Cross Street folio 83

city, town Chestertown state Maryland

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys NONE

title

date ___ federal ___ state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Survey No. K-585

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date of move _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

Olivett Methodist Church is located on the east side of the Route 313 a short distance south of the Galena crossroads. The present, presumed second church building of Olivet Methodist Church was built in 1842 of brick, probably in a simple Greek Revival Style that was similar to that of numerous other Kent County churches of that period. In fact, it probably closely resembled Shrewsbury Church before that building was "Victorianized." The original Olivet structure was itself "Victorianized" in 1887. New windows were installed, the gallery removed, the facade windows for the gallery blocked, a tower built, and possibly the projection built at that time. After the remodeling, it resembled in its three-part form most other Kent County churches of the late nineteenth century: Vestibule-tower, nave or main section, and chancel projection. The main section of the church is still essentially simple, but the tower is clearly in the Victorian Gothic Revival tradition.

(Continued)

8. Significance

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Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1842, 1887

Builder/Architect

check: Applicable Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D
and/or

Applicable Exception: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Level of Significance: ☐ national ☐ state ☐ local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

The present Olivet Methodist Church building has served Methodists of the Galena area for almost 150 years although in 1887 its appearance was considerably altered by a Victorian remodeling. The congregation has an older history, with Methodism in the area beginning before the Revolutionary War with a visit by the itinerant Francis Asbury, the "Father of American Methodism." An early frame chapel, perhaps the first, was built by 1802. The Olivet Methodist Church building as it stands today is an interesting hybrid of styles. It was transformed from what was undoubtedly a very plain, simple, perhaps somewhat Greek Revival style of meeting house with one section to a Victorian three-part Kent County church with vestibule-tower, nave and chancel projection. The tower in particular is a noteworthy example of the Gothic Revival Style with its octagonal wood spire over a brick tower that has pinnacles. The original 1842 building probably bore considerable resemblance to the building of the same period erected by Shrewsbury Parish, which also was Victorianized later in the nineteenth century.

(Continued)

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10. Geographical Data

Quadrangle scale _____

H

11. Form Prepared By

PS-2746

Reflecting its middle nineteenth century origins, the main (nave) section of Olivet Methodist Church is about 34 feet wide by 44 feet deep. It is one storey with tall walls and a quite steep gable roof. The roof is said to have been raised during the 1887 remodeling. It is not quite clear how this was done, but it may be instructive to compare the pitch of the interior ceiling with the pitch of the roof on the exterior, leading possible to the conclusion that the old roof framing was retained for the ceiling and trussed to a new, higher, and steeper gable roof frame above it.

The brick bond of the entry gable end (the west end that faces the public road) is Flemish, with narrow mortar joints (c. 1/4"). The mortar there seems particularly white although there are some areas of repair with modern mortar that is out of keeping with the original work and detracts from the original appearance that was sought. The brick of the west end is a higher quality, more uniformly dark-red, face brick. The rear gable end and the long sides are laid in 1-to-5 common bond, with a probably less costly brick. Mortar joints are wide, the color is less uniform, and a rare dark header is included. Mortar joints are about 1/2". Vestigial buttresses were added to each corner during the Victorian remodeling, in keeping with the Victorian Gothic Revival Style. That style regarded the medieval churches of Europe as the highest form of church architecture and sought to incorporate elements of those churches. The buttresses indeed are not large. They are about 13" wide and 17" deep and extend upwards about two-thirds of the wall height. Similar buttresses were applied to the tower that probably also dates to the same remodeling, though in the case of the tower the buttresses were applied to corner pilasters and on both faces at each front corner.

The brickwork on the approach gable-end indicates that the church once had a gallery, undoubtedly reserved for the use of blacks during the period when blacks and whites worshipped together, though segregated. By 1887 there were most likely no blacks in attendance, their having left to form their own, independent churches at Olivet Hill and at Davis Hill. Many white churches removed their galleries at this time. Either they were not needed, became structurally unsound, or were so associated with the former segregated seating that whites would not sit there. The outlines of the two small gallery windows are visible in the facade.

Methodism in the Galena area had its origins during the pre-Revolutionary War period, when Francis Asbury, the itinerant Anglican reformer who became known as the Father of American Methodism, is known to have preached there at the home of a Mr. Dixon in 1773. During this period Galena was called Georgetown Crossroads, for the intersection of the important north-south route from Georgetown to Chestertown that is now Route 213 with the route from Georgetown to Delaware and from Georgetown to New Market (Chesterville). Little is known of the progress of Methodism in the vicinity for some time thereafter, but Asbury noted in his journal for April, 1803, that he had preached at the "new chapel" at Georgetown Crossroads.

This evidently was the chapel that was already built by the time of the formal deed transaction between Cornelius Comegys of Kent County and the trustees of the Galena chapel (Robert Moody, Thomas Sewell, James Wilson, James Hurtt, Joseph Rasin, James Salisbury who was a Georgetown innkeeper, Samuel Taylor, James Jones, and Edward Hurtt). The price was £12, and the size of the plot was one acre. The language of the January 2, 1802, deed indicates that the chapel was already built. This chapel is said to have been frame. It was moved to the side when a new, brick chapel was built in 1842, first used there for special services and classes for black Methodists as Methodist churches became increasingly segregated during the pre-Civil War years. Initially blacks and whites had worshipped at the same services, though with segregated seating, in the gallery for the blacks if the church had a gallery. After the blacks began their own church at Olivet Hill, the location of an early community of free blacks, the old chapel was moved there, about a mile away, probably across frozen fields, for their use. It served as a church until the building of a new church by the Olivet Hill Methodists in 1907 and then as a hall to one side until it became too dilapidated for further use.

The 1842 brick building was probably built in a simple Greek Revival style similar to other churches of the period in Kent County. It was later "Victorianized" and the tower added.

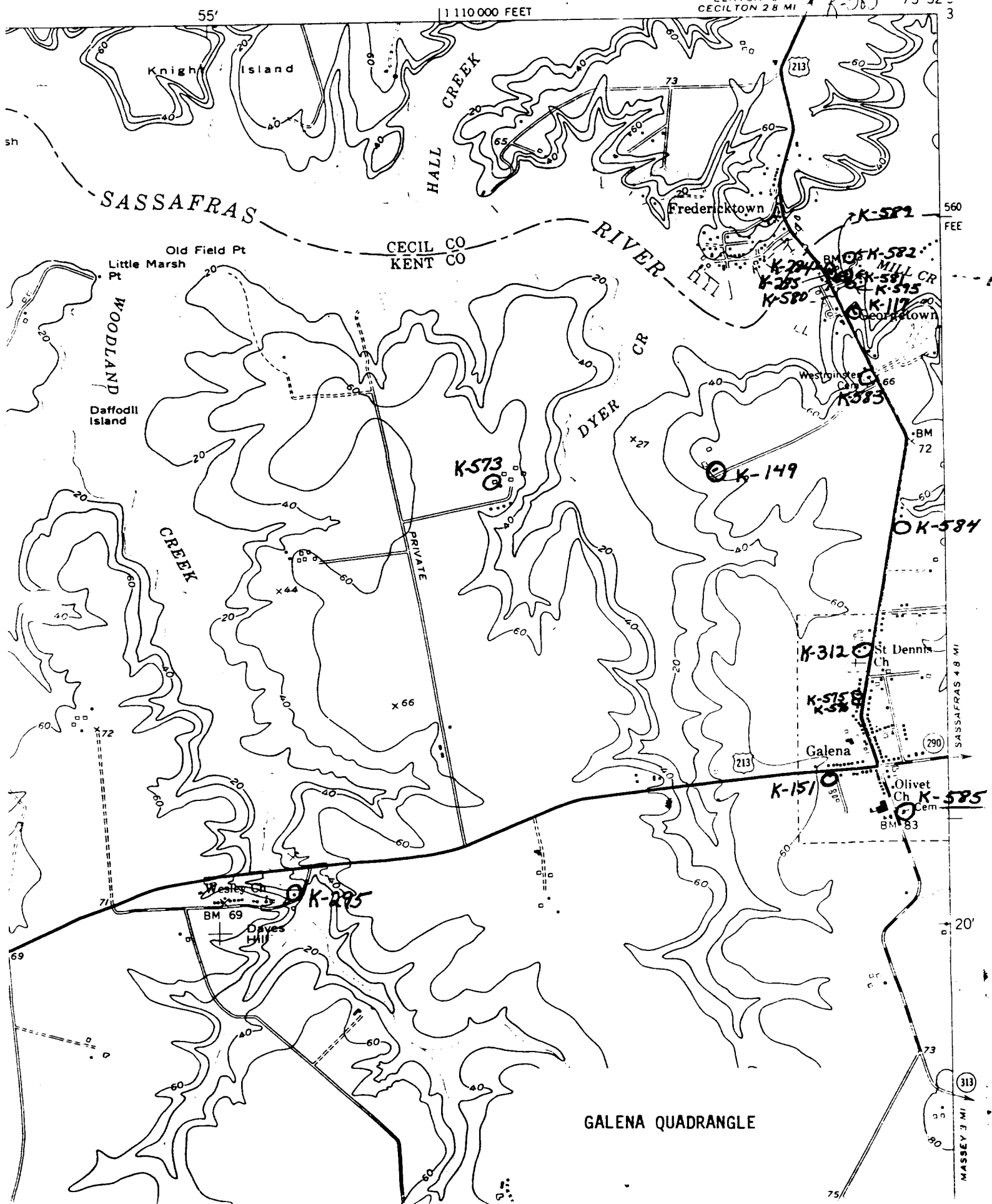
Before 1860 a parsonage was acquired on the east side of north Main Street, and in 1888 a one-storey frame Sunday school chapel was built on the lot to the south of it, for Sunday school classes and evening prayer meetings. It was demolished in the 1960s.

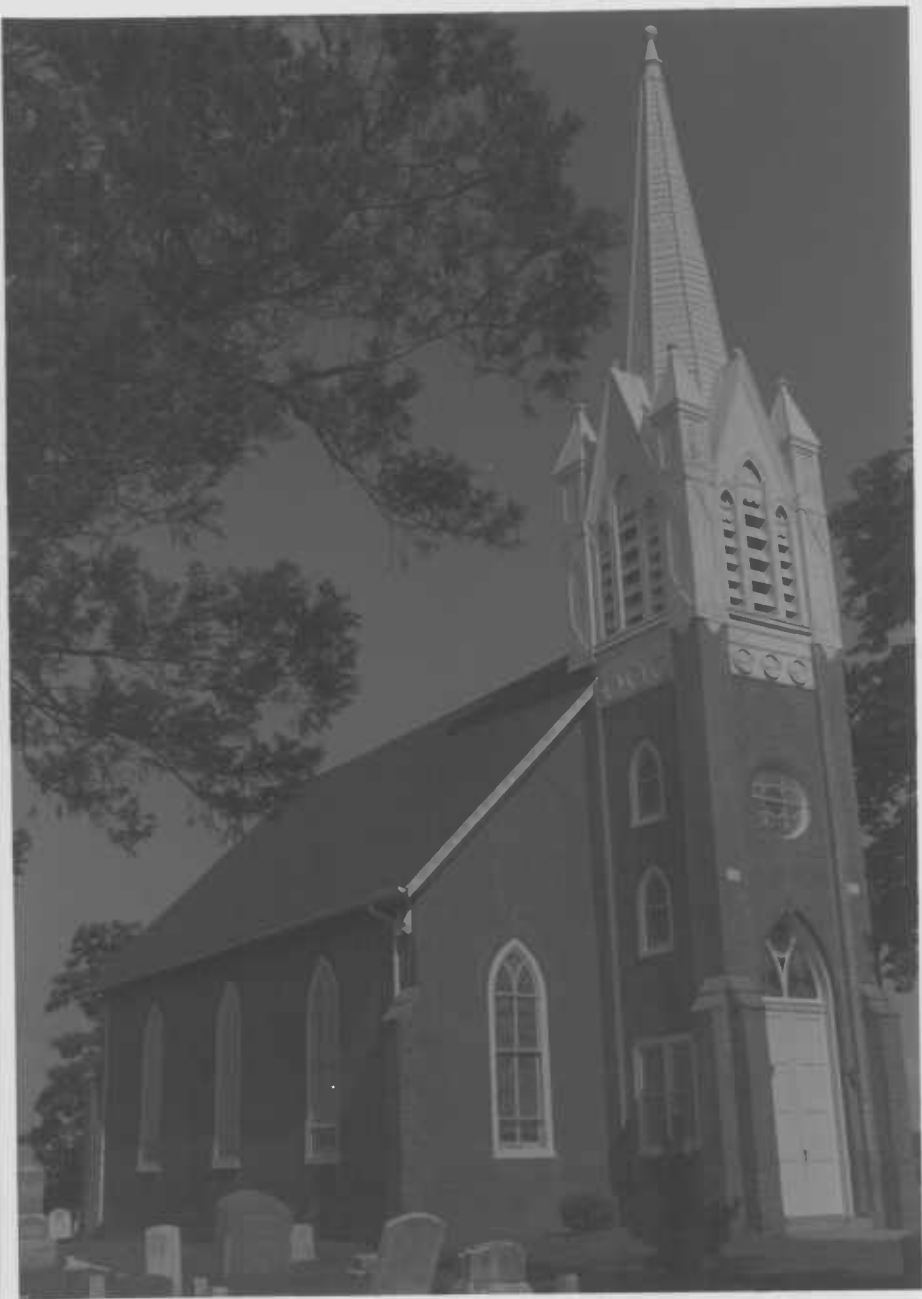
At some point during the nineteenth century a Methodist Protestant congregation was formed in Galena that built a frame church on north Main Street. As elsewhere, there must have been a local schism within the Methodist church that led a group to withdraw from the Methodist Episcopal Church (Olivet) and align themselves with the new group that advocated a supposedly less authoritarian form of church governance. By the 1880s, however, this congregation was evidently dead, for the Roman Catholic parish of St. Dennis, which had in 1855 built at building in the countryside at what later became known as Lambson's station, bought the Methodist Protestant Church. It was used by St. Dennis' Parish until a new church was built in the 1930s.

9.1 Continued

William Henry Williams, The Garden of American Methodism: The Delmarva Peninsula, 1769 - 1820. Dover, Del: Peninsula Conference of the United Methodist Church, 1984.

E.C. Hallman, The Garden of Methodism. Dover, Del.: Peninsula Annual Conference of the Methodist Church, (1984).





K-585

Olivet Methodist Church

Main Street, Galena

M. Q. Fallaw - 8/1/85

View to east

K585-14



K-585

Olivet Methodist Church

Main Street, Galena

M. Q. Fallaw - 8/1/85

View to northwest

Q1-585/